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WESTERN EUROPE REVIEW [redacted] 25X1

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Italy: Berlinguer and His Peers

In the spring of 1975 Enrico Berlinguer emerged from the 14th Congress of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) as its undisputed leader. Berlinguer had been elected Secretary General three years before, after a three-year interim in which--as deputy to the ailing Secretary General Luigi Longo--he was de facto leader of the party. The slight, uncommunicative Sardinian aristocrat had long been recognized as the logical successor to Togliatti and Longo. His preeminence, however, stemmed in part from the self-disqualification of older more charismatic rival leaders. Longo chose Berlinguer to succeed him not only because he was able, but also because he was--in party terms--a man of the middle.

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When the 15th PCI Congress meets this week, Berlinguer will be reelected party leader. He will, however, be less the unquestioned leader than he was in 1975 and 1976. The local and parliamentary elections of those years saw the PCI enlarge its vote from 27 to 34 percent. With those victories, Berlinguer's prestige and popularity in the party and the country at large soared; polls suggested he was the most trusted politician in Italy. A good deal of Berlinguer's popularity and prestige has since been consumed in the difficult maneuvering since August 1976, when the PCI began to support the Andreotti government. But he remains a man of the middle; though he may be contested in the top councils of his party, those who doubt his policies and his tactics come together as momentary coalitions of nay-sayers, and the sum of their disagreements with Berlinguer does not add up to a coherent alternative

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policy.

The Alliance Problem

Historically, the most divisive single issue for the PCI has been the problem of which allies the party must have to come to power. During the 1960s disagreement on this topic was symbolized by two groups--the

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followers of Giorgio Amendola and of Pietro Ingrao. The first supported the idea of a laic alliance, recreating the ties with the Socialists that had existed until the mid-1950s; the second argued that priority should be given to arrangements with the left wing of the Christian Democratic Party (DC), in the ultimate hope of splitting it off from the more conservative wing. Both strategies included the lay and clerical forces as potential allies, and the argument was over questions of emphasis and priority. During the 1960s neither strategy seemed very promising: the Socialists moved farther away from the PCI in the center-left experiment, while the Christian Democratic Party sustained its basic strength and obstinately showed no tendency to split
25X1 off.

All currents of opinion in the PCI recognized that greater party strength was a precondition for effective alliances. The parliamentary election of 1972 gave the PCI 27 percent of the vote, but also left the Christian Democrats with the option of forming a center-right coalition. The coalition lasted only a year and was followed by another shaky center-left government that also fell after about a year. Even though the Christian Democrats were having trouble holding a majority together, they still showed no inclination to turn to the Communist
25X1 Party.

Against this background, in late 1973 Berlinguer pondered the future alliance policy of the PCI, with the bloody collapse of the Allende experiment in Chile as his immediate stimulus. The result was Berlinguer's famous "historic compromise." Berlinguer's proposal was an effort to cope with the shortcomings of both of the PCI's old theories of alliance--Amendola's call for an alliance with the Socialists, which could hope for the barest of majorities at best, and Ingrao's idea of fomenting a split in the Christian Democratic Party. In Berlinguer's conception, the Communists had to pay almost as much attention to the forces positioned to the right of these groups. If an implacable conservative bloc with the implicit support of the officer corps and the security forces refused to come to terms with a government of the left, that government could not succeed--and might be overthrown by violence. Consequently,

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Berlinguer concluded that the PCI must accept a compromise not only with the leftwing forces in the Christian Democratic Party, but with the party as a whole, hoping in the future to bring the rightwing forces under control.

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The events of 1974-76 made the "historic compromise" seem an increasingly realistic policy. In 1974, veteran Christian Democratic leader Amintore Fanfani failed to make the national referendum on legalized divorce a rallying ground for a shift to the right; the gains scored by the PCI in 1975 and 1976 were the largest scored by any party since 1948. By 1976, although the DC was still not ready to accept the historic compromise with its implication of permanent PCI presence in the government, it seemed to have concluded that the country could not be run without PCI cooperation and support.

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[redacted]

The Primacy of Tactics

The formation in August 1976 of the Andreotti government--whose life depended initially on PCI abstention in Parliament and later on direct PCI support--opened a new period. The PCI goal was now to enlarge its opening; ultimately the party hoped to get its own cabinet ministers and have a direct and unquestioned share of power. In this process, PCI maneuvering has been countered by three different forces, two of which may have been unexpected:

-- Resistance to PCI advances by conservative Christian Democrats on the grounds of ideology and aversion to sharing power.

-- Resistance by portions of the Christian Democratic left and the Socialist Party, both fearing that in a permanent alliance they would end as the puppets or dupes of the Communists.

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-- Resistance by the CISL and the UIL, the labor unions controlled by leftwing Christian Democrats and by the Socialists, to counsels of wage restraint and austerity advanced by the largely PCI-controlled union, the CGIL. Here again, the non-Communist unions are motivated by fears of PCI/CGIL hegemony. [redacted] 25X1

As a result, PCI progress since August 1976 toward full participation in power has not only been relatively slow, but has been accompanied by a series of small setbacks that called into question the plausibility of PCI participation: the Andreotti government, which fell in January, was unable to carry out a clear economic program; the unions have not been willing to accept much wage restraint; PCI-led urban and regional governments installed after the 1975 election, lacking fiscal powers and central support, have been disappointing. And the Christian Democratic left, particularly after the murder of Aldo Moro, has shown no sign of rallying to the PCI, while the Socialist Party, under the new leadership of Bettino Craxi, has been actively hostile to it. [redacted] 25X1

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The PCI's Next Choices

The PCI has for years been picturing itself as a partito di governo, a responsible party whose presence at the center of affairs is necessary if Italy is to be well governed. While in theory it is perfectly possible for the PCI to continue this stance if it goes into opposition after the national election expected in June, the operation would in practice be very difficult--because it would be hard to control. The unions, which have been restive under a policy of austerity, would certainly pose greater demands; the rank and file and middle-level functionaries would be happy to be freed from the need to support the Christian Democrats; and in all this Berlinguer would risk losing many middle-class and intellectual voters attracted to the party in recent years. So, although Berlinguer is clearly willing to go into opposition if the Christian Democrats refuse him a larger governing role, he is probably very reluctant to take the step, not so much because the move would be called a defeat for him--though it would be--but because the next phase would be even more difficult to manage than the present one. 25X1

Because Berlinguer is the PCI's quintessential man-of-the-middle, his continued predominance in the PCI may be necessary for the continuation of a carefully balanced, flexible, and controlled party strategy. Berlinguer's failure would release all sorts of contradictory thrusts--increased hostility to the Soviets on the part of some, but also labor intransigence, and radical posturing of all sorts. This prospect may in itself be enough to discourage overt rivalry among leaders who have always worked together very well. An ad hoc coalition of nay-sayers can easily break up, and there is no particular reason to think that party leaders--or the rank and file--prefer someone like Chiaromonte to Berlinguer. 25X1

The leadership to be elected at the party congress will probably--according to press accounts--include a deputy secretary general, perhaps Chiaromonte, flanked by a Berlinguer lieutenant like Paolo Bufalini as a coequal. The presumptive result of this arrangement could be a PCI with a more nearly collective

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leadership than it had ever had. Such a leadership might eventually change course, but the prospect is far from certain and it is not clear how such a leadership would get around the compelling logic of Berlinguer's "historic compromise" strategy. And it is even less clear how Italy would fare if the PCI chose--or drifted--to a course of all-out opposition to the government.

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Italian Communist Local Party Congresses 25X1

During the past two months, the Italian Communists have held a number of local party congresses to prepare for the national congress scheduled to begin on 30 March. The attitudes expressed in the congresses make it clear that the local parties intend to play an active role in defining the Communist Party's identity and future strategy. 25X1

Ideological questions apparently did not spark the heated debate many observers expected in the local congresses; the draft theses--which will constitute the basis of discussions at the national level--were all approved with few difficulties. Only in Tuscany--a longtime Communist stronghold--were the theses subjected to much criticism. The Tuscan delegates objected to the party's call for the preservation of a private sector in the Italian economy and unsuccessfully fought the leadership's efforts to reduce the importance of "Leninism" in Italian Communism. In Naples, on the other hand, Communist politicians seemed willing to consider doctrinal changes that would remove Marxism-Leninism from its central position, reducing it to one of several ideological traditions contributing to the party's identity. These delegates did insist, however, that the national congress reaffirm the party's working class character and its commitment to socialism. 25X1

Local opinions on international affairs were a mixture of "orthodox" and "autonomous" positions. The congresses were virtually unanimous in their condemnations of the Chinese invasion of Vietnam, their admiration for the "moderate" Soviet response, and their criticism of the new, "shadowy" relationship between China and the United States. In the northeast--Veneto (Venice) and Friuli-Venezia Giulia--local party delegates did, however, acknowledge that the Soviet model was inapplicable in Western Europe, and that there the "third way"--or Eurocommunism--was the only method to establish socialism. In Tuscany, the Congress, with little dissent, even approved continued Italian participation in NATO. 25X1

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Local party concerns clearly centered on domestic politics. Communists in Lombardy, Campania, Liguria, Tuscany, and Veneto all heartily endorsed Secretary General Berlinguer's decision to withdraw support from the Andreotti government. All the delegates appeared convinced that cooperating with the government had cost the party support. The Genoese party was particularly concerned about the failure of Communist labor and youth organizations to attract and retain more new recruits. 25X1

Local parties also applauded the national leadership's uncompromising demand to be included in any new government. And they seemed to relish the prospect of a return to opposition if their demand was not met. Many delegates seemed to believe that an opposition role was necessary to reinvigorate the party and restore its revolutionary image. In Trieste, a national committee member suggested that, ideally, the party should adopt a "flexible strategy" that would allow it to react more deftly to changing circumstances. Other party leaders called for the maintenance of good relations with the Socialists in case a renewal of a "leftist alternative" policy becomes necessary or desirable. 25X1

Although there was little direct criticism of Berlinguer and his "historic compromise" strategy--cooperation with non-Communist forces in governing Italy--local leaders were clearly dissatisfied with the results thus far achieved by this policy. In Naples, the final congress document went so far as to declare that the problems of the south had actually become more serious, despite increased cooperation between Communists and Christian Democrats there. 25X1

Accordingly, the congresses revealed bitter anti-Christian Democratic sentiment among local Communists. In localities such as Naples city and the Ligurian provinces, Communist administrations blamed their shortcomings on years of Christian Democratic misrule and on the Christian Democrats' obstructionist posture as an opposition party. Consequently, local party leaders seized on the opportunity to shift from the defensive to the offensive by attacking the Christian Democrats and blaming their anti-Communist prejudices for the collapse of the national government. Local Communist leaders seem

Communist Leader Berlinguer Addresses Party Faithful [redacted] © *

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*This photograph is from L'Express, September 1975.

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eager for an electoral test, not only to regain this tactical advantage but also to divert attention away from their own blemished administrative records. 25X1

Perhaps the most significant organizational problem discussed by the local party congresses was verticismo--a lack of consultation between the leadership and the masses. Some delegates called for a greater degree of local autonomy and a decentralization of some aspects of the party apparatus in order to increase rank-and-file participation in decisionmaking at higher levels. The party in Naples, for example, suggested the creation of zonal committees, designed to bypass the provincial structure and give the municipal party direct access to the regional hierarchy; this proposal is expected to be approved by the national leadership. 25X1

Conclusion

The tenor of discussions at the local congresses suggests that most Communists are in the mood for introspection and criticism. On questions of ideology and international affairs, local leaders appeared open to some innovation, provided a way is found to blend new approaches with traditional values and attitudes. 25X1

Local Communist leaders seem less sure of themselves on domestic political questions. On the one hand, they do not reject the "historic compromise" strategy and pose no workable alternatives to it. On the other hand, they are anxious to reestablish the dynamic image the party had before joining the parliamentary majority. But beyond a desire to return to the opposition, local Communists are ambivalent about the party's future strategy and refuse to discard any options. In any event, they are clearly sending a signal to the party leadership that it must take rank-and-file opinion into account when developing policy--a fact which may become more apparent during and after the forthcoming national congress. 25X1

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West Germany - Brazil: Strengthening Bonn's Latin Connection

West German Chancellor Schmidt is certain to make a determined effort to improve Bonn's political and commercial relations with Brazil during his visit to Brasilia next week. Schmidt's visit is the first by a foreign head of state since the inauguration of the new Figueiredo administration and underscores Brazilian efforts during the past few years to diversify its foreign contacts by developing ties with Western Europe. The Chancellor will make a strong pitch for the completion of the West German - Brazilian nuclear accord, but it seems clear that the Brazilians will press for modification of the package. No major new bilateral agreements are likely to result from the visit, although both governments are certain to go out of their way to underline the already extensive current ties.

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25X1 West German Chancellor Schmidt © *

Brazil's New President, Joao Baptista Figueiredo ©** 25X1

*This photograph is from Liaison.
**This photograph is from Franz Furst.

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Schmidt is scheduled to visit Brazil 3-7 April on a trip that ostensibly is to reciprocate former Brazilian President Geisel's visit to Bonn in March 1978.* In the past the relationship between Bonn and Brasilia has been far more important to the Brazilians than to the West Germans, and West Germany has done little more than politically necessary to maintain its commercial credibility. Last March the West Germans were quick to rebuff Brazilian efforts to get Bonn certification of a "special relationship" during Geisel's trip. Because the West German economic and political stake in Brazil and in Latin America is growing, however, Bonn may be more willing to accommodate Brazilian interests and risk a higher profile.

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The nuclear accord, initially envisaged as the symbol of Brazil's regional power status and the salvation of West Germany's nuclear power industry, has become a source of irritation for both parties. Brazilian critics in recent months have repeatedly attacked the agreement on scientific and economic grounds. They contend that the technology involved does nothing to advance Brazilian knowledge. Some Brazilian officials are even skeptical of West Germany's intention to fulfill all of its commitments under the accord, particularly the promise to transfer technology.

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*The Chancellor will also make short stops in Peru to visit the West German Ambassador (a close friend) and the Dominican Republic. The latter stop was added as a "democratic" balance to mollify critics of his visit to "military-run" countries--Brazil and Peru.

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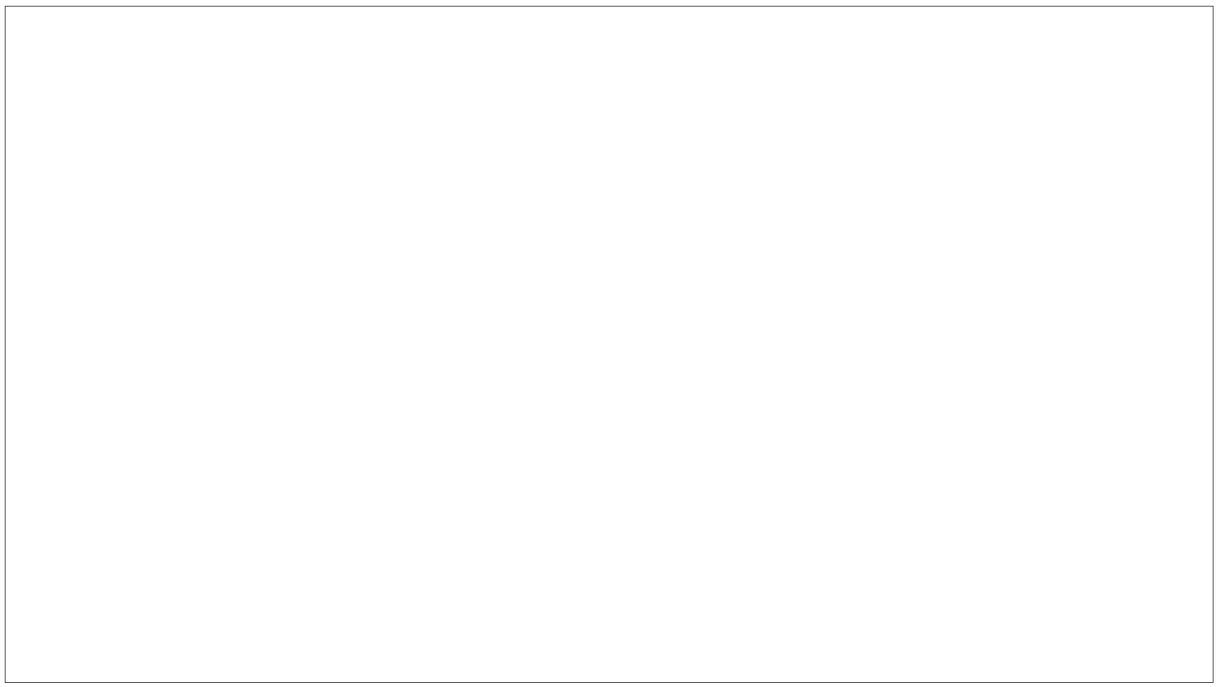

Economic Ties

As further inducement, Schmidt may be prepared to make some trade-related concessions to enhance the already extensive economic ties between the two countries. Brazil is West Germany's most important trading partner in the developing world, while West Germany is the second largest foreign investor in Brazil. Although West German private firms bemoan the discriminatory nature of Brazilian import and investment policies, they need little encouragement to stay in the Brazilian market. The Brazilians are anxious to keep West German capital and technology flowing and would be amenable to additional joint manufacturing-trade ventures with West German firms. Bonn has already indicated a willingness to intensify the transfer of technology to Brazil in minicomputers and telecommunications modernization projects. A joint West German - Brazilian commission on scientific and technical cooperation meets regularly, while a joint commission on trade and economics was set up last October.

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The Brazilians may hope to get the West Germans to act as an active intermediary on their behalf with the EC. Brazilian media have already interpreted the Schmidt visit as a continuation of the "European option" policy

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begun by Geisel and former Foreign Minister (now Ambassador to the United States) Silveria. Brasilia can argue that such intercession by Bonn is a natural follow-on to a joint pledge to improve cooperation between the lesser developed and developed countries made last year during Geisel's visit to West Germany. The Brazilians may also wave the prospect of assured raw materials supplies to resource-poor West Germany. This would be well-received by the West Germans in their continuing efforts to diversify foreign sources of key industrial raw materials. 25X1

Schmidt's visit seems certain to accelerate political and economic ties between the two countries, but no major new deals appear in the offing. Neither West Germany nor Brazil are in a position to chart new directions for a relationship that, despite being remarkably friendly, remains essentially one of economics. The Chancellor is under heavy pressure from West German nuclear interests to save the accord. At the same time, however, Schmidt must contend with many in his own Social Democratic Party who take a dim view of Brazil's record on political liberalization. Figueiredo's crackdown on labor union activity last weekend in Sao Paulo is certain to reinforce this view. Figueiredo obviously will want to come off well in projecting Brazilian national interests and to show that his one-month-old administration is firmly in charge. Moreover, Brazilian critics will be watching closely to see just how well the new President handles the West German connection.

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Turkey: New Decree on Straits Transit

Turkey has issued troublesome new regulations governing the passage of foreign warships through Turkish territorial waters--including the Bosporus and Dardanelles, which are controlled by provisions of the Montreux Convention. Ankara appears to have expanded upon some of the provisions of the Convention and Turkish law to come up with several new stipulations that are contrary to international practice or in violation of US laws.

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Some of the more important provisions of the new decree are:

-- Nuclear warships must now request permission to pass through Turkish territorial waters instead of simply giving notification.

-- The limitations on nuclear-powered warships also apply to ships carrying "nuclear material." It is not clear from the language of the decree whether this also applies to nuclear weapons. If so, the Turkish controls are unacceptable to the US Navy.

-- A 10-day instead of a three-day notification of a delay in passage is now required. This feature will reduce Soviet flexibility to reinforce its surface fleet in the Mediterranean with ships from the Black Sea. Until now, Moscow has been able to send small groups of warships with only a minimum delay through a system of "contingency declarations."

-- Foreign warships must submit to the jurisdiction of Turkish courts and are liable for various damages beyond the fault of the ship or its crew.

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-- Prohibitions on the use of certain equipment such as radios and sonars, which are necessary to the safe navigation of the ship.

-- Prohibitions against pollution, including discharge of sewage and trash while in transit.

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The impact of the new decree cannot yet be measured. To date only the Greek press has protested. In addition to frequent transits by Soviet warships, straits are used by US destroyers making a one-week cruise through the Black Sea on a once-per-quarter basis to demonstrate the principle of freedom of the seas. French, Italian, and British warships have also made recent visits to Black Sea ports. It remains to be seen whether any of the other signatories of the 1936 Montreux Convention--France, the United Kingdom, Greece, Turkey, the USSR, Japan, Bulgaria, Romania, and Yugoslavia--will protest the decree or call for an abrogation of the Convention. Turkey has been quite fastidious in the past in its enforcement.

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The new decree is likely to be brought up at the Law of the Sea Conference that opened 19 March in Geneva. None of the signatories to the Montreux Convention are expected to call for its nullification, mainly out of fear that it would be replaced by an agreement more detrimental to their interests.

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